

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer, a senior member of the House Ways & Means and Budget Committees, issued the following statement in response to recent controversy surrounding Gibson Guitar and the Lacey Act:

“Enforcement of the Lacey Act’s ban on the importation of illegally-harvested wood products is essential for the American forest products industry’s success. Before we amended the Lacey Act with bipartisan support in 2008 to cover illegally harvested timber, that industry was losing more than \$1 billion a year in lost opportunities and lower prices.

“The American forest products industry is highly competitive and adheres to strong environmental and labor laws. But it cannot compete with illegal timber operations. Illegal timber harvests are an economic, environmental and humanitarian disaster. Half of the world’s forests have already disappeared, and the illegal removal of high value threatened tree species destined for international trade is often the first step leading to forest clearance. The tracks and roads built to access and remove timber become entryways for further illegal cutting, hunting and burning.

“In today’s economy, Congress should be looking to strengthen the Lacey Act’s enforcement – not weaken it. Enforcing the Lacey Act protects the American timber industry against unfair competition from illegal logging and helps to prevent the off-shoring of more wood and wood products jobs. I call on members of both parties to uphold their longstanding commitment to protecting American jobs, American businesses and endangered species by defending this law.”